

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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INFO AMCONSUL DHAHRAN PRIORITY

USAFS USMTM RIYADH PRIORITY

USMTM DHAHRAN PRIORITY

S E C R E T JIDDA 1740

EXDIS

E.O.: 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, MARR, SA

SUBJ: MEETING WITH MINDEF SULTAN ON ARMED FORCES SURVEY

REF : (A) STATE 62810 (DTG 282248Z MAR 74)

(B) JIDDA 1388 (DTG 201359Z MAR 74)

(C) USMTM DHAHRAN DTG 301248Z MAR 74 (NOTAL)

(D) USMTM DHAHRAN DTG 040946Z MAR 74 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: CHUSMTM INTRODUCED HEAD OF USAF RSAF SURVEY TEAM TO MINDEF SULTAN ON APRIL 1. SULTAN SPOKE OF IMPENDING JOINT USG-SAG DECLARATION AND REQUESTED OUTLINE OF SURVEY'S DRAFT CONCLUSIONS "WITHOUT COMMITMENTS" IN EARLY MAY, SO THAT PRINCE FAHAD COULD USE THESE AS BASIS HIS DISCUSSIONS ON MILITARY SUBJECTS IN WASHINGTON. SULTAN EXPECTS GENUINE SPIRIT OF FORTHCOMINGNESS AND WILL KEEP PROGRESS OF SURVEY TEAM UNDER CLOSE PERSONAL SUPERVISION. IN SIDE REMARK, SULTAN SAID KING HAD APPROVED PROPOSED IMPROVED HAWK CONTRACT AND SIGNING WOULD TAKE PLACE SOON. KINGDOM WOULD BE NEEDING ANOTHER TEN BATTERIES, IN ADDITION TO EXISTING TEN, SAID SULTAN.
END SUMMARY.

2. ON APRIL 1, CHIEF USMTM, ACCOMPANIED BY HEAD OF USMTM USAF SECTION RIYADH COL. COLIN C. REILLY AND EMBASSY
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POL/MIL OFFICER CECIL PRESENTED HEAD OF USAF SURVEY TEAM, COL.

LURIE J. MORRIS, TO MINDEF SULTAN. MEETING WAS ALSO ATTENDED BY CHIEF OF AIR FORCES GENERAL ZUHAIR AND CHIEF OF STAFF GENERAL SHUMAIMRY, PLUS USMTM INTERPRETER. CHUSMTM STATED THAT TEAM WAS ANXIOUS TO GET TO WORK SO AS TO COMPLETE DRAFT BY MAY 1, IN ORDER TO ALLOW SUFFICIENT TIME FOR REVIEW IN WASHINGTON SO AS TO MEET JUNE 1 PRESENTATION DEADLINE.

3. SULTAN STATED THAT ALTHOUGH IT WAS STILL VERY SECRET, WITHIN NEXT FEW DAYS US AND SAG WOULD RELEASE JOINT DECLARATION ANNOUNCING NEW ERA OF US-SAG COOPERATION IN ECONOMIC, SCIENTIFIC, AND MILITARY FIELDS, AND THAT SECOND DEPRIME MIN PRINCE FAHAD WOULD VISIT US IN MAY. FAHAD, SAID SULTAN, WILL NEED TO CARRY WITH HIM THE BROAD OUTLINES OF THE RSAF PLAN TO USE AS A BASIS FOR DISCUSSING FUTURE COOPERATION IN THE MILITARY FIELD. SULTAN STATED THAT HE HOPED THE TEAM WOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE THIS OUTLINE PRIOR TO FAHAD'S DEPARTURE. CHUSMTM REPLIED THAT SINCE THE DRAFTING OF THE PLAN WOULD BE COMPLETED BY MAY 1, COL. MORRIS WOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE A GENERAL BRIEFING AT THAT TIME. THE PLAN COULD NOT, HOWEVER, BE CONSIDERED FIRM UNTIL ITS RECOMMENDATIONS ARE REVIEWED BY WASHINGTON.

4. SULTAN THEN ASKED COL. MORRIS WHAT HIS INSTRUCTIONS HAD BEEN IN WASHINGTON. MORRIS REPLIED THAT HE WAS INSTRUCTED TO CONDUCT A BROAD SURVEY OF ALL ASPECTS OF THE RSAF AND TO PREPARE A PLAN FOR ITS MODERNIZATION. THE GUIDELINES ASSUMED THAT THE FORCE WOULD BE DEFENSIVE IN NATURE, WITH SOME CAPABILITY FOR CLOSE AIR SUPPORT, AIRLIFT, AND AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE. CHUSMTM ADDED THAT RSAF SURVEY WAS PART OF BROADER ARMED FORCES SURVEY AND THAT HEAD OF OVERALL TEAM WOULD ARRIVE IN NEXT 5-6 DAYS. CHUSMTM REQUESTED SULTAN TO NOTIFY MODA THAT THE ARMY SURVEY TEAM WOULD SHORTLY BE ARRIVING AND TO REQUEST MODA OFFICERS TO FACILITATE THE TEAM'S TASK BY COOPERATING WITH USMTM ARMY SECTION IN GATHERING NECESSARY INFORMATION NEEDED FOR THE TEAM'S STUDY. SULTAN SUMMONED CHIEF OF STAFF SHUMAYMRI TO MEETING AT THIS POINT, BRIEFED HIM ON DISCUSSIONS, AND INSTRUCTED HIM TO FORM A COMMITTEE TO MEET WITH CHUSMTM TO LAY NECESSARY GROUNDWORK FOR COOPERATION.

5. SULTAN RETURNED TO SUBJECT OF IMPENDING JOINT US-SAG DECLARATION AND REITERATED FAHAD'S NEED FOR A BROAD OUTLINE
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"WITHOUT COMMITMENTS" PRIOR TO VISITING U.S. SAG EXPECTS, SAID SULTAN, TO BE ABLE TO PURCHASE THE MOST MODERN EQUIPMENT FROM THE UNITED STATES. THE FACT THAT THE US IS SAG'S CLOSEST FRIEND DOES NOT ELIMINATE THE POSSIBILITY THAT SAG MIGHT STILL BUY FROM OTHER FOREIGN SOURCES, BUT THEY WOULD PREFER TO BUY FROM THE US. CHUSMTM RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT ONE ADVANTAGE OF STUDY TEAM COMING FROM WASHINGTON IS THAT MEMBERS ARE FAMILIAR WITH LATEST EQUIPMENT UNDER DEVELOPMENT.

6. SULTAN CONCLUDED DISCUSSION OF THIS SUBJECT BY STATING THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO MEET AGAIN WITH CHUSMTM AND TEAM REPRESENTATIVES AFTER WEEK OR TWO TO ASSESS PROGRESS.

7. IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO GENERAL SHUMAYMRI'S ENTRY SUTLAN REPORTED THAT KING FAISAL HAD APPROVED THE RAYTHEON IMPROVED HAWK CONTRACT AND THAT IT WOULD BE SIGNED SHORTLY. THE ARMY TEAM, SAID SULTAN, MUST STUDY THE EXPANSION OF THE HAWK AD SYSTEM; PERHAPS TEN NEW BATTERIES WOULD BE NEEDED IN ADDITION TO THE PRESENT TEN AND ONE TRAINING BATTERY, SINCE THE OIL FACILITIES, THE CAPITAL, AND NUMEROUS OTHER IMPORTANT POINTS WERE INADEQUATELY DEFENDED AT PRESENT. CHUSMTM REPLIED THAT COL. MORRIS AND HIS AIR FORCE TEAM WOULD BE CONSIDERING THE KINGDOM'S NEED FOR AIR DEFENSE IN DETAIL.

8. COMMENT: SULTAN PLANS TO KEEP PROGRESS OF STUDY UNDER CLOSE SUPERVISION. HE IS ANTICIPATING A NEW SPIRIT OF COOPERATION TO BE SIGNIFIED BY IMPENDING JOINT DECLARATION AND IS ANXIOUS TO PARTAKE OF BENEFITS IT MAY OFFER FOR HIS MINISTRY. HE FULLY EXPECTS NEW ERA OF CLOSE COOPERATION AND WILL BE MONITORING SURVEY CLOSELY TO SEE IF ACTIONS SPEAK AS LOUDLY AS WORDS. ARMED FORCES SURVEY WILL PROVIDE, IN FACT, FIRST EVIDENCE OF HOW USG VIEWS NEW RELATIONSHIP. WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO BE FORTHCOMING WITH SULTAN, AS AN EARNEST OF THE EXTENT AND SINCERITY OF OVERALL USG-SAG COOPERATION. A REPETITION SIMILAR TO LAST YEAR'S F-4 DISCUSSIONS, WHEN TEAM WAS NOT ALLOWED TO DISCUSS MANY PERTINENT DETAILS OF WEAPONS SYSTEM, WOULD QUICKLY BE INTERPRETED BY SULTAN--AND PASSED ON TO OTHER MINISTERS--AS SHOWING THAT JOINT DECLARATION IS MERELY NEW BOTTLE FOR SAME OLD WINE. IN THIS REGARD, EMBASSY AND USMTM BELIEVE IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO ALLOW SURVEY TEAM TO RELEASE MATERIAL UP THROUGH SECRET ON CURRENT SYSTEMS IF WE ARE TO HAVE MENINGFUL DIALOG.

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(REF C). WE WILL BE, AFTER ALL, EXPECTING MODA TO RELEASE TO US INFORMATION SAG CONSIDERS SECRET OR HIGHER.

9. MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES SURVEY TEAM HAVE NOT HEARD OF THE BROAD COOPERATIVE COMMISSIONS WE PLAN TO ANNOUNCE. IT MAY BE THAT OTHER WASHINGTON WORKING LEVELS ALSO DO NOT RECOGNIZE THE FULL SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS NEW RELATIONSHIP. SINCE FULL UNDERSTANDING OF THIS WILL BE NECESSARY BACKGROUND FOR NUMEROUS POLICY DECISIONS TO BE ADDRESSED, RECOMMEND FULL BRIEFING OF STATE AND DOD WORKING LEVELS ON THIS SUBJECT TO INSURE FULL UNDERSTANDING.

10. RECOMMEND EXDIS HANDLING OF THIS CABLE BE DROPPED AFTER PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP.
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